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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CAPTION)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2019

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [BL](#)

SUBJECT: CND: MORALES TO REQUEST DELISTING OF COCA LEAF

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte for reasons: 1.4 (d)
and (e)

1.(C) Summary and Action Request: Bolivia's President Evo Morales will be one of the first speakers at this week's High-Level Segment of the United Nations Commission on Narcotics Drugs (CND). Morales is expected to request the delisting of the coca leaf under the 1961 drug control convention but pull his punches in talking about the United States. According to the Bolivian Ambassador in Vienna, President Morales and his advisors believe that the new Administration will be more open to Bolivian concerns and "understanding" of his delisting request. Vice Minister Felipe Caceres (Bolivia's "drug czar") will request a bilateral meeting with the U.S. delegation on the margins of the meeting to discuss mutual concerns and explore areas for renewed cooperation. Action Request: Please inform us whether we should proceed to set up a bilateral meeting. End Summary and Action Request.

12. (C) Ambassador Schulte met informally on March 9 with Bolivia's Ambassador Bazoberry (please strictly protect) to discuss the upcoming CND meeting. Bazoberry reconfirmed that President Morales would be coming for the High-Level Segment, arriving late March 10, speaking March 11, and departing early March 12. Bazoberry said that Morales' statement is being drafted by Ambassador Pablo Solon, Bolivia's Ambassador to the UN in New York and a close advisor to Morales. Bazoberry expected that Morales would restate Bolivia's longstanding desire to delist the coca leaf under the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. In parallel, Bolivia would deliver a letter to the Secretariat making this request.

13. (C) Bazoberry said that Morales and his advisors hoped that the new Administration would bring a new approach to Bolivia and the drug situation. At a minimum, they hoped that the new Administration would "listen" to Bolivia's concerns and state its "respect" for the coca leaf as part of Bolivian culture. According to Bazoberry, this yearning for "respect" was almost an "anthropological" desire. There was hope in La Paz for senior-level contact with the new Administration at the upcoming Summit of the Americas.

14. (C) Bazoberry is setting up a meeting between Morales and European representatives. He is billing this as a way for Morales to present Bolivia's case on coca, but also hopes that Morales will hear European support for the drug control convention. Bazoberry is trying to convince his own government that delisting is a process that will take many years.

15. (C) Bazoberry said that Morales would be joined by the Minister of Interior and two Vice Ministers. One Vice Minister, Felipe Caceres, is Bolivia's "drug czar" and will be requesting a meeting with the U.S. delegation. Bazoberry thought it was important to listen to Bolivian concerns and to convince senior government officials that delisting was

not an easy task. Bazoberry also said that some Bolivian officials had recognized the risk to Bolivia caused by their government's termination of counternarcotics cooperation with the United States. There was concern about Mexican drug cartels penetrating Bolivia and acknowledgment that only DEA had the intelligence necessary to counter this threat. The Europeans could not substitute for the US in this regard. Perhaps, Bazoberry suggested, there was some way to cooperate on counternarcotics efforts while leaving the issue of coca to one side.

¶16. (C) Again please protect Ambassador Bazoberry, who passed this information in confidence and acknowledges that he is not fully in line with his government's policy.

¶17. (C) Action Request: The Bolivian proposal on delisting coca is obviously a non-starter. Among other things, it would require opening the 1961 convention, which we are trying to reaffirm through the UNGASS review. However, we want to be sure the Department is aware of this approach if there is interest in the Bolivian Ambassador's suggestion of using Vienna as a venue to revisit the bilateral relationship on drug issues. With this in mind, we request Washington guidance on whether to proceed to set up a bilateral meeting with Vice Minister Caceres upon formal receipt of a request. He is arriving in Vienna March 9 and will be here throughout the CND, providing flexibility in scheduling. If Washington agrees to a bilateral meeting, we would seek a private meeting with A/S Johnson outside the public glare of the conference.

SCHULTE